



Use Early Warning to Boost Retention

Scott Beadenkopf

With **special thanks** to
Sr. Bernadette McInnis



Scott Beadenkopf a Drexel employee and a member of Drexel University's Online Learning Team, works at Neumann University as Director of Academic Technology. He has taught undergraduates face-to-face, and is teaches faculty online in his now required course, Online Course Facilitation and Design. He is currently chair of Neumann's E-Learning Committee, which will be hosting a Faculty Technology Showcase at Neumann on April 5th. Special thanks to Sr. Bernadette McInnis at Neumann University, who has modeled and taught how to retain students online.



In this room, I can tell who is paying attention. I can see who is chatting with their neighbor. I can see when you look down at your device. But what are my online students doing?

What Are They Doing?

Staying afloat in their F-2-F courses



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It depends on who they are.

Traditional students taking one online course and 4 face-to-face courses are dealing with the face-to-in-your face instructor asking for their homework.

The adult student may be holding down a job, changing diapers, and figuring out how to pay the mortgage.

Even if your course is important to them, other demands may be grabbing their attention.

So we need to get their attention.

The Golden Week and a Half

Engagement = Survival



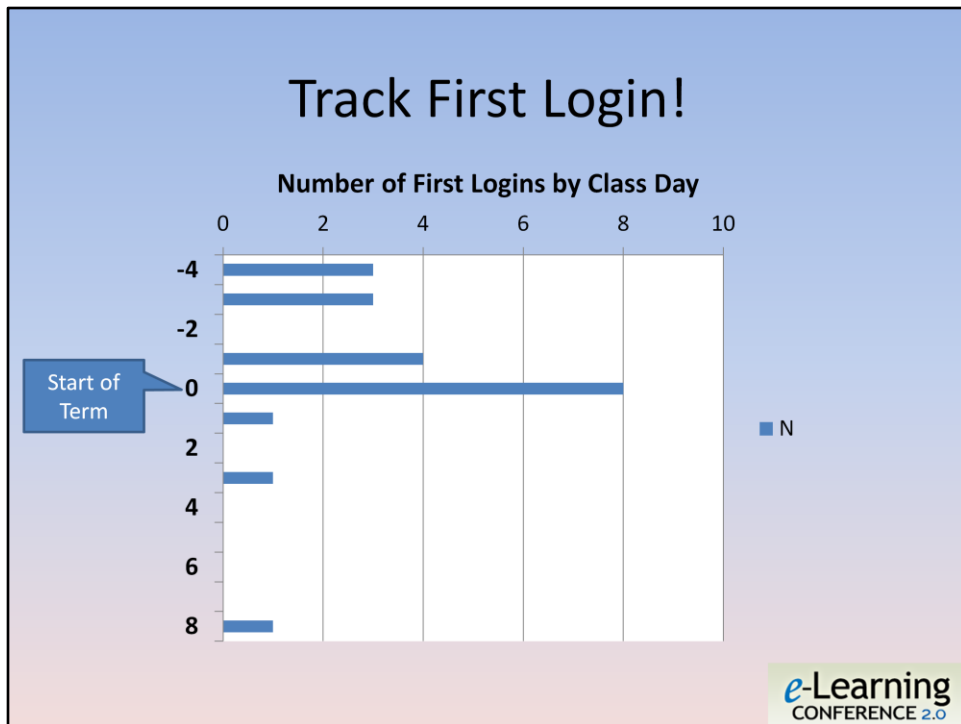
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Just as the EMT's know that they have a golden hour to intervene in trauma, I think we have a golden week and a half to engage our students. If we haven't engaged them after a week and a half, their survival in the course is in danger, and we will spend the rest of the term chasing after them.

This is my informal conclusion.

It is hard to get statistics on retention within a course.

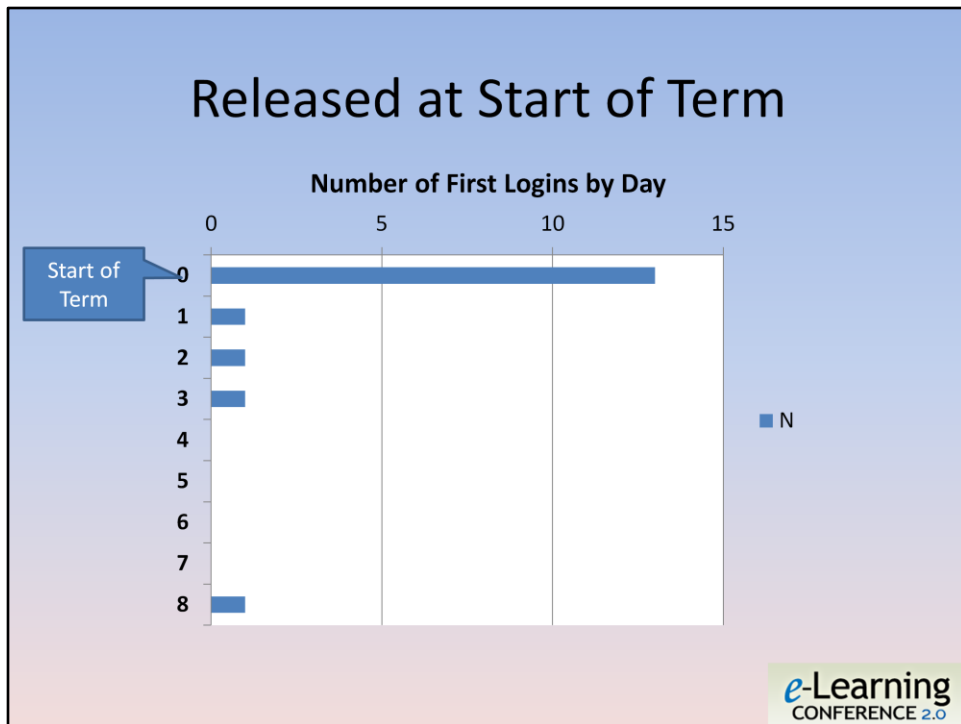
These login statistics reflect only those who completed the course, because those who dropped the course were removed from the Bb Vista roster.



It is very important to find out who has not logged into your course in the first week and to contact those who have not. Maybe by day 3 – or if you send out a general message, you could wait to send out more serious warnings.

Most LMS allow you to track student logins and clicks

This course was opened to students early by an experienced instructor who encouraged the students to get acquainted with the site before the official start of term.



Taught by an instructor with less experience, this course was opened to students on the official start date of the term.

Bb Vista Student Tracking

The screenshot displays the Blackboard Vista Student Tracking utility. The interface includes a sidebar with navigation options like 'Instructor Tools', 'Manage Course', 'Assessment Manager', 'Assignment Drop', 'Grade Book', 'Group Manager', 'Tracking', and 'Notes (H)'. The main area shows a table of sessions with columns for 'First Access', 'Last Access', 'Sessions', 'Total Time', and 'Mail'. A specific session is selected, and a detailed view is shown with columns for 'Event Time', 'Tool', 'Action', 'Item', and 'Time Spent'.

Event Time	Tool	Action	Item	Time Spent
February 27, 2011 6:58 PM	Login	Login	Neumann University	00:00:00
February 27, 2011 6:58 PM	My Grades	Grades viewed		00:01:10
February 27, 2011 6:59 PM	Mail	E-mail tool activated		00:00:03
February 27, 2011 6:59 PM	Mail	Message read	My Myers-Briggs letters	00:00:08
February 27, 2011 7:00 PM	My Grades	Grades viewed		00:01:04
February 27, 2011 7:01 PM	Folder	Content folders viewed	Home Page	00:00:06
February 27, 2011 7:01 PM	File	Content page viewed	Freud Chapter - To Do list	00:00:04
February 27, 2011 7:01 PM	Assignments	Assignment read	Case Study 1	00:00:03
February 27, 2011 7:01 PM	Folder	Content folders	Home Page	00:00:02

The interface also shows a date filter set to 3/24/2011 and a time filter set to 10:10 AM, with a 'Run Report' button at the bottom.

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The Bb Vista tracking utility is very powerful.

Picking the Student Tracking report

We can see the First Access information and sort by that column

We can drill down to see each student session and even

drill into a session to see almost click-by-click student work

Before Start of Term

- What is your communication plan?
 - Before start
 - During term
- Learn about academic support services and at risk procedures

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My suggestions are – devise a communication plan before the start of class

Will you reach out before the start of class?

Which communication tools will you use?

Learn about support services so that you can refer students immediately, if necessary,

The First Week

- From Instructor
 - Communication plan
 - Introduction multi media
 - Email
- From Students
 - Introductions
 - Practice Assignment
 - Collect information

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Make sure your students understand the plan. You might even quiz them on it as part of the data you collect in the first week.

Even if you are tracking logins, assign work that makes use of the important tools that you will use later.

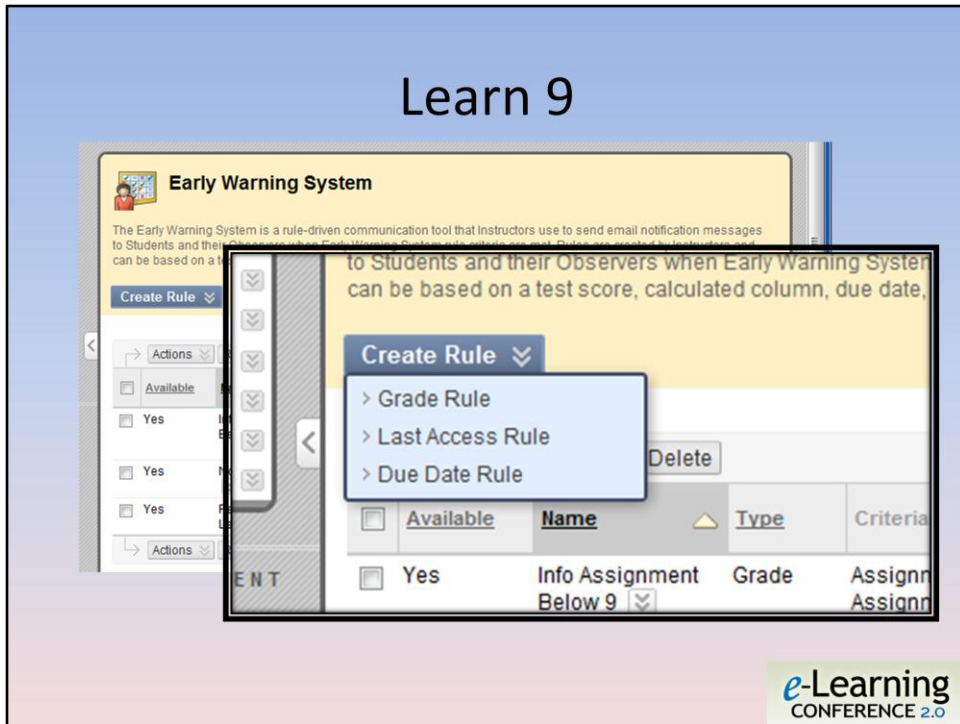
Tough Love in Week 1

- Send e-mail to students who:
 - Haven't logged in by ____
 - Haven't submitted ____ or posted ____
- Grade assignments immediately
- Tech problems are no excuse
 - Help Desk
 - Links to help

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Mostly tough for the instructor – provide rapid turn-around on all assignments.
Make sure they know that you are there.
Don't accept technology excuses

Learn 9



Blackboard Learn 9 has a built-in Early Warning System based on Rules that you create.

It is not automatic: you need to create the rules, refresh the data, and trigger the notifications.

Grade Rule

Rule Type

Grade

Availability

☒ Yes ☐ No

2. Rule Criteria

To define the score threshold for a particular Grade Center item, first select the item from the drop-down list. Possible points for the items appear in parentheses. Categories for each item are included in the drop-down list, such as Assignment, Blog, or Test. Specify the criterion and then add a numeric score in the form of a positive number.

★ Select a Grade Center Item

Total(up to 20)

★ Define Criteria

less than or equal to

★ Value

☐ Score ☒ Percent

3. Submit

Cancel

Submit

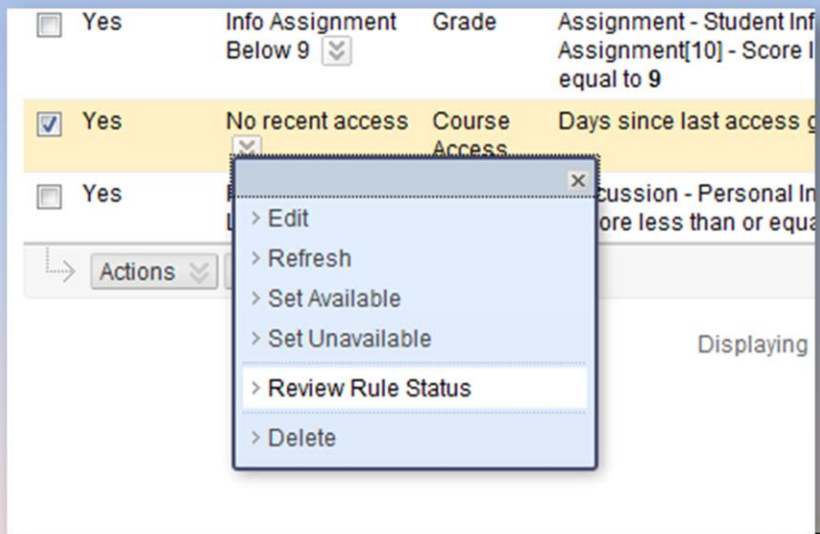
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The process of creating the rules is straight forward.

One nice feature is that Learn 9 allows you not only to base a rule on individual columns but also on the total of your columns, even if you have not created a totals column.

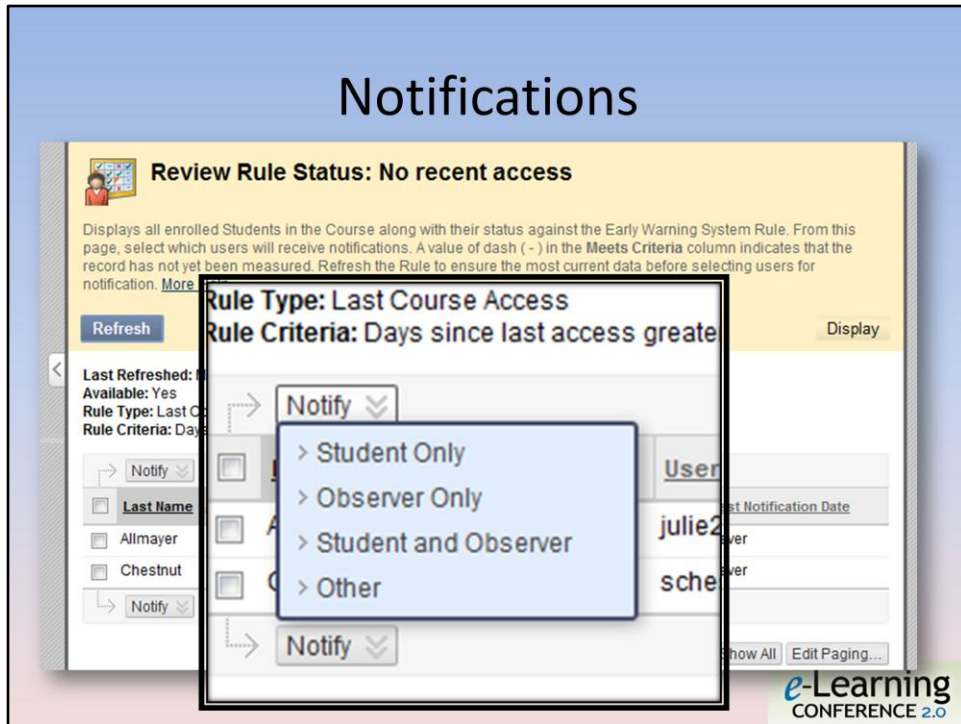
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No Recent Access Rule



After creating the rule, review rule status to see students who have been identified by the Early Warning rule.

Notifications



The identified students must be selected, then the type of notification is chosen. Observer email can be chosen on the fly.

The students identified here are actually Drexel Online Learning Team staff. No actual students have been harmed in this experiment!

Wrap Up

- Start Early
 - Course
 - Contact
- Require week 1 submissions
 - Fast turnaround feedback
- Track logins
- Warnings - week 1 – 1½
- Share what works here next year

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To sum up:

Release your course early and communicate early and often.

Get students to use the important course tools in the first week and provide quick feedback on their work.

Track logins and remind, then warn, those who have not.

Keep track of what works and report back to us at eLearning 2.0 next year.

Contact

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